

a situation where we are, obviously, looking for every dollar we can save. And so I hope to raise that issue with some amendments I will be offering at a later point in some of the property tax relief measures, but we continue to refuse to address that fundamental issue of our schools are the biggest user of our property taxes. We have, in my view, an inefficient system that can be made more efficient and save dollars, and we need to start talking about that seriously. But, at the same time, I understand where Senator Withem is coming from on this effort, and I do rise in support of the amendment, but what comes back I hope will recognize the need to balance off, the need to recognize sparsity without rewarding inefficiency. Thank you.

PRESIDENT ROBAK: Thank you, Senator Wesely. Senator Bernard-Stevens.

SENATOR BERNARD-STEVENS: Thank you, Madam President, members of the body. Senator Bohlke, I am going to differ with you just a little bit when you stated you supported the Withem amendment. Senator Jones, I recognize, you know, where the hard...who the hard work really has come from on this issue, so I will rise in support of the Jones amendment that Senator Withem is following behind your lead on, and I think recognition needs to be made. I do want to say a couple of words for my good friend Senator Jones. He is absolutely correct when you get into Cherry County and the Valentine area, they truly have very unique problems that many of us in the state understand, maybe intellectually, but we don't really have the understanding of the emotional and the actual effect that the sparsity factor has, and Jim has been excellent in reflecting those views and fighting for the views. Even though we disagree on the common levy concept, Jim has been very true to his constituency in talking about that concept. And I think people need to be...certainly he needs to be given credit for that, and it's because of Senator Jones and others, Senator Wickersham as well, that we have possibilities like this that we can move on, and I think that's a credit to all of those, really on both sides of the issue. However, I do want to make one particular comment. You know, in my view, and it's simply mine, and, Senator Jones, you can correct me if I'm wrong, or Senator Withem certainly can, the intent of this, if you read four, it simply says we recognize that the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act does not currently recognize the unique costs. Some people are trying to say that